

Claim(s)

What is claimed is:

1. A method for transmitting a document file describing a document from a sender computer to a receiver computer via a computer network linking the sender computer and the receiver computer to a server computer, wherein the sender computer is operated by a sender, wherein the receiver computer is operated by a receiver, the method comprising the steps of:

- a. transmitting the document file from the sender computer to the server computer via the computer network;
- b. transmitting the document file from the server computer to the receiver computer via the computer network; and
- c. providing viewer software executed by the receiver computer for generating a display of an image of the document described by the document file when received by the receiver computer, and for thereafter automatically returning verification data to the server computer via the computer network verifying that the receiver computer has successfully displayed the document image.

2. The method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

- d. storing log data on the server computer indicating when the receiver computer returned the verification data to the server computer; and
- e. providing the sender computer with access to the log data via the computer network.

3. The method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

- d. transmitting a comment file containing comments generated by the receiver from the receiver computer to the server computer, wherein the comment file references the document file;
- e. storing the comment file on the server computer; and

f. providing the sender computer with access to the comment file via the computer network.

4. The method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

d. transmitting a publish request from the sender computer to the server computer wherein the publish request identifies the receiver computer; and

e. prior to step b, transmitting a email message generated by the sender from the server computer to the receiver computer identified in the publish request, wherein the email message references the document file.

5. The method in accordance with claim 4 further comprising the step of:

f. prior to step e, storing the document file in the server computer and assigning a network address to the document file stored on the server computer, wherein the email message transmitted at step e includes a reference to the assigned network address.

6. The method in accordance with claim 5 wherein the reference to the assigned network address is a hypertext link included in the email message.

7. The method in accordance with claim 1 wherein step a comprises the sub-steps of:

a1. transmitting a publish request from the sender computer to the server computer, wherein the publish request identifies the receiver computer, wherein the publish request indicates that the receiver must sign on to the server computer by transmitting a user name and a user password to the server computer via the computer network in order to receive the document file; and

a2. transmitting the document file from the sender computer to the server computer via the computer network.

8. The method in accordance with claim 7 wherein step b comprises the sub-steps of:

b1. verifying that the receiver is signed on to the server computer, and

b2. thereafter transmitting the document file from the server computer to the receiver computer via the computer network.

9. The method in accordance with claim 1 wherein step a comprises the sub-steps of:

a1. transmitting a publish request from the sender computer to the server computer, wherein the publish request identifies the receiver computer, wherein the publish request indicates that the receiver computer is to be prevented from printing the document file; and

a2. transmitting the document file from the sender computer to the server computer via the computer network.

10. The method in accordance with claim 9 wherein step b comprises the sub-steps of:

b1. transmitting the document file from the server computer to the receiver computer via the computer network, and

b2. preventing the receiver computer from printing the document file.

11. The method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

d. assigning to the document file a first password generated by the sender, and

e. prior to step b, transmitting the first password to the server computer.

12. The method in accordance with claim 11 wherein step b comprises the sub-steps of:

b1. providing a document password entry form to the receiver computer,

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b2. conveying a second password entered into the document password entry form to the server computer, and

b3. transmitting the document file from the server computer to the receiver computer via the computer network when the second password matches the first password.

13. The method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the receiver computer returns the verification data to the server computer as an encoded network address.

14. A method for transmitting a document file describing a document from a sender computer to a receiver computer via a computer network linking the sender computer and the receiver computer to a server computer, wherein the sender computer is operated by a sender, wherein the receiver computer is operated by a receiver, wherein the receiver computer includes a monitor viewable by the receiver, the method comprising the steps of:

a. transmitting the document file via the computer network from the sender computer to the server computer;

b. storing the document file on the server computer and assigning the document file a unique network address;

c. transmitting an email message via the computer network to the receiver computer, wherein the email message includes a hypertext link to the document files's assigned network address;

d. displaying the email message on the receiver computer monitor so that the receiver may view it and activate the hypertext link whereby the receiver computer returns the document file's network address to the server computer;

e. transmitting the document file from the server computer to the receiver computer via the computer network following the receiver's activation of the hypertext link; and

f. providing viewer software running on the receiver computer for generating a display on the receiver computer

monitor of the document described by the document file when received by the receiver computer;

wherein when the viewer software has successfully displayed the document, it automatically returns verification data in the form of an encoded network address to the server computer via the computer network verifying that the document has been successfully displayed.

15. The method in accordance with claim 14 further comprising the step of:

g. prior to step a, transmitting a publish request from the sender computer to the server computer wherein the publish request identifies the receiver computer that is to receive the email message at step c.

16. The method in accordance with claim 15 wherein the publish request transmitted in step g indicates that the receiver must sign on to the server computer by transmitting, prior to step e, a user name and a user password to the server computer via the computer network in order to receive the document file at step e.

17. The method in accordance with claim 16 wherein step e comprises the sub-steps of:

e1. verifying that the receiver is signed on to the server computer, and

e2. thereafter transmitting the document file from the server computer to the receiver computer via the computer network following the receiver's activation of the hypertext link.

18. The method in accordance with claim 15 further comprising the steps of:

h. assigning to the document file a first password generated by the sender; and

i. prior to step b, transmitting the first password to the server computer.

19. The method in accordance with claim 18 wherein step e comprises the substeps of:

- e1. providing a document password entry form to the receiver computer;
- e2. conveying a second password entered into the document password entry form from the receiver computer to the server computer; and
- e3. transmitting the document file from the server computer to the receiver computer via the computer network at step e only when the second password matches the first password.

20. The method in accordance with claim 15 wherein the publish request indicates whether the receiver computer is to be prevented from printing the document file.

21. The method in accordance with claim 14 further comprising the steps of:

- g. storing log data on the server computer indicating when the receiver computer returned the verification data to the server computer; and
- h. providing the sender computer with access to the log data via the computer network.

22. The method in accordance with claim 14 further comprising the steps of:

- g. transmitting a comment file containing comments generated by the receiver from the receiver computer to the server computer, wherein the comment file references the document file;
- h. storing the comment file on the server computer; and
- i. providing the sender computer with access to the comment file via the computer network.

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